

The Flawed Conference in Bonn

The conference under the auspices of the United Nations now underway in Bonn, Germany is a step in the right direction. We the Hazara of Europe and North America, wholeheartedly support the United Nations efforts in bringing peace to war-torn Afghanistan. However, we have serious reservations about this conference, which we think should be addressed very carefully by the United Nations. Otherwise, if left unattended, these shortcomings and flaws not only will jeopardize these noble efforts; they would also put serious doubt to the fairness of the process as well.

1. The US, the Western as well as the Islamic countries emphasize the need for a broad-based multiethnic representative government in Afghanistan that is going to be formed after the fall of the Taleban. However, in the first conference for the discussions on this issue, some of the ethnic groups are overrepresented and some other ones are highly underrepresented. How could this government be formed if the ethnic constitution of the country is not properly represented?
Based on various statistics, the Hazaras constitute the third largest ethnic group in Afghanistan, making up between 19 to 25% of the population. How could they appropriately be represented in a government if the Hazaras have not been properly represented in the formation of it?
2. The plan for the conference was laid down in Kabul and announced in a joint press conference with the representatives of the Rabbani government. The representatives of the Hazaras, the third largest group in the country were informed by phone later in Bamian. It would have been more appropriate if the Hazaras had been included in the process earlier.
3. The Rabbani government is ethnically based Tajik and its core and driving force is even narrower with the defence, foreign, interior, intelligence and security portfolios being occupied by Panjshiris. The same monopolistic arrangement claims to represent the Northern Alliance as well as Hazara or Uzbek representation. How could the UN allow this government to choose the representatives of the Hazaras?
4. At the conference, the Rome process is heavily represented; the Cyprus process is represented; the newly mushroomed and mysterious Peshawar process is represented; the Rabbani government is represented but the Hazaras are not properly represented. The first three processes are ethnically based Pashtoon and the fourth one is of Tajik extraction. The processes are only legitimate so far as they represent the diversity of the ethnic constitution of the country. Otherwise, they will be more of the same.
5. The Rabbani government does not only choose the own representatives but also those of the Hazaras and Uzbeks. In reality, the representatives of the Hazaras are a handful of Rabbani's Shia proteges who represent neither Shias nor Hazaras. Again, based on available statistics, the non-Hazara Shias make up only 1% of the population. If the Rabbani government chooses its own representatives, we have no problem with it, but it is not at all in a position to choose the representatives of the Hazaras. We are very capable of doing that ourselves. What is important here is that the United Nations is playing at the hand of the Rabbani administration. It is sad that the UN at the time that it wants to help in the formation of the

future government of Afghanistan is being toyed with by the Rabbani government in Kabul and thus, perhaps unintentionally, creates an atmosphere of distrust among Afghans.

We hope the UN process succeeds and for its success we suggest the following:

1. The UN should base its activities on the true ethnic composition of the country. Based on that, the representatives should come from the people themselves not from a government that is focused on its narrow minded self-perpetuation purposes. Therefore, only the people of the country themselves should send their representatives, not the former king or Rabbani government.
2. For the conference to succeed the Rabbani government should be pushed out of Kabul, the city should be demilitarised and the UN multinational peacekeepers should be stationed in the city and all other Afghan meetings should be held under close scrutiny of UN and international observers. If the Afghans had played their hand fairly, we wouldn't have been in this mess in the first place.
3. The four major ethnic groups should be given equal opportunity to decide the future of the country as the federated state of Afghanistan with Kabul as its capital. No one ethnic group should be given the overall control of the country, regardless of its size. We have painful memories of being ruled by this or that group which ended in brutalising our people.

We do hope with all sincerity that justice and fairness are practised in all the proceeding of the UN sponsored peace efforts for Afghanistan. Otherwise it will be disappointment for the world and another disaster for the people of Afghanistan who have suffered enormously.

With Best Wishes And Hope For A United Free and Independent Afghanistan

The Hazaras In The Diaspora

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